

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Fisher Sand and Gravel Railroad Ballast Test Drill
Proposed Implementation Date:	Fall 2019
Proponent:	
Location:	Township 31 North, Range 14 East, Section 36
County:	Hill County
Trust:	Common Schools

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

To drill into a prominent rock outcropping in Hill County to determine its suitability to be mined for use as railroad bed ballast.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)
Northeastern Land Office (NELO)
Proponent: Fisher Industries, Fisher Sand and Gravel
Surface Lessees: Gregoire Farms Inc.

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

The DNRC, and NELO have jurisdiction over this proposed project.

The proponent is responsible for acquiring all required permits for the proposed project. The proponent is responsible for settling all surface damages with the surface lessees.

DNRC is not aware of any other agencies with jurisdiction or other permits needed to complete this project

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does not grant permission to drill test holes for railroad ballast suitability.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does grant permission to drill test holes for railroad ballast suitability.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

Most of the disturbance caused by this test project will be short term tracks from the small drilling rig that will be used to do the testing. These tracks should recover quickly due to the surrounding vegetation being almost entirely crested wheatgrass.

If re-seeding is necessary the proponent will acquire certified, weed free seed and refer to the Plant Materials Tech Note No. MT-46 (Rev. 4) dated September 2013 for seeding rates.

No noxious weeds previously recorded on any tracts but some invasive weeds are present and will need controlled.

No rare plants or cover types are present.

No long term cumulative effects to vegetation are anticipated.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

All the areas that will be affected that are not already solid rock have been farmed and disturbed previously and would quickly recover. Some bird roosts may be disturbed but there were no raptor or other bird nests seen when inspecting the site.

No aquatic habitats will be affected

No cumulative effects are anticipated.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

Species of Concern 3 Species Filtered by the following criteria: "Residency = 05105148" (Based on mapped Species Occurrences)										
FISH (ACTINOPTERYGII)										
SCIENTIFIC NAME COMMON NAME TAXA SORT	FAMILY (SCIENTIFIC) FAMILY (COMMON)	GLOBAL RANK	STATE RANK	USFWS	USFS	BLM	FWS SWAP	% OF GLOBAL BREEDING RANGE IN IT	% OF IT THAT IS BREEDING RANGE	HABITAT
<i>Chirostomus toxostoma</i> Northern Redbelly Dace	Cyprinidae Eleotridae	G5	S3				SOCH2	4%	2%	Small prairie rivers
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Cotton, Garfield, Chouteau, Cornish, Daniels, Fergus, Glacier, Hill, Judith, Liberty, Lewis and Clark, McCone, Mussouri, Petroleum, Phillips, Rosebud, Stillwater, Teton, Yellowstone, and Yellowstone National Park. State Rank Reason: The Northern Redbelly Dace is currently listed as a "G5" species of concern in Montana because they are endemic to the state and are at risk because of limited and declining numbers. These dace are found in small, headwater streams, even though they may be abundant in some areas.										
<i>Etheostoma caeruleum</i> Iowa Darter	Percidae Percidae	G5	S3			SENSITIVE	SOCH1	1%	1%	Small prairie rivers
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Carbon, Chouteau, Daniels, Fergus, Glacier, Hill, Judith, Liberty, McCone, Mussouri, Petroleum, Phillips, Rosebud, Stillwater, Teton, Yellowstone, and Yellowstone National Park. State Rank Reason: The Iowa Darter is currently listed as an "S3" species of concern in Montana because they are at risk because of limited and declining numbers. These darters are found in small, headwater streams, even though they may be abundant in some areas.										
<i>Sander canadensis</i> Sauger	Percidae Percidae	G5	S2			SENSITIVE	SOCH2	1%	15%	Large prairie rivers
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Big Horn, Blaine, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Carbon, Daniels, Fergus, Glacier, Hill, Judith, Liberty, McCone, Mussouri, Petroleum, Phillips, Rosebud, Stillwater, Teton, Yellowstone, and Yellowstone National Park. State Rank Reason: The Sauger is currently listed as an "S2" species of concern in Montana because they are at risk of extinction in the state, because of limited and/or declining numbers, range and/or habitat, even though it may be abundant in some areas. Population issues from the introduction of the Northern Pike and the Common Carp are likely to impact the Sauger. It is currently listed as a "S2" species of concern in Montana because they are at risk because of limited and declining numbers, range and/or habitat, even though it may be abundant in some areas. Population issues from the introduction of the Northern Pike and the Common Carp are likely to impact the Sauger.										

The area is not considered critical wildlife habitat. Some animals may be temporarily displaced but the duration of this project will be short enough to not cause any lasting animal population effects.

There are no known unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources on this site.

No cumulative effects to habitat are anticipated.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

The project will not create any new jobs. These positions are already held by employees of the proponent. No cumulative effects to the employment market are anticipated.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

There are no direct or cumulative effects to taxes or revenue for the proposed project.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

There will not be temporary increases in traffic or traffic patterns if this project is approved.

There will be no direct or cumulative effects on government services.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

There are no zoning or other agency management plans affecting this project.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

There will be no direct or cumulative effects on recreation or wilderness activities.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing

The proposed project does not include any changes to housing or developments. Population and housing will not be affected.

No direct or cumulative effects to population or housing are anticipated.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

There are no native, unique or traditional lifestyles or communities in the vicinity that would be impacted by the proposal.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

The proposed project will have no effect on any unique quality of the area.

